

<b>TORRES STRAIT PRAWN MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Meeting No. 13 13 December 2012</b>
<b>MANAGEMENT</b> <b>Title Targeted Indigenous Community Consultation in the Torres Strait</b>	<b>Agenda Item 4.1 FOR NOTING</b>

## RECOMMENDATION

4.1.1 That TSPMAC **NOTES** an update on the research project - *Targeted Indigenous Community Consultation in the Torres Strait; gaining an understanding of Indigenous communities' perceptions regarding boat and gear length in the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery.*

## BACKGROUND

The Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC) supported research to better understand Indigenous communities' perceptions regarding boat length and fishing gear length in the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery (TSPF).

Mr Anthony de Fries (Principal Investigator) and Mr Marshall Bezel (co-investigator) accepted a research contract (administered by AFMA) to undertake this project.

The research project involves targeted consultation with those Torres Strait communities in the vicinity of the Prawn Fishery:

- Erub Island (Darnley)
- Masig Island (Yorke)
- Poruma Island (Coconut); and
- Ugar Island (Stephens)

Permission to visit the four communities was obtained from the Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) Chairs of the four communities.

Consultation visits scheduled for the first week of October 2012 were deferred due to a combination of factors including a cultural event involving one community and interested parties being off community for training courses and school holiday travel.

More recently visits scheduled for 12 to 16 November 2012 were postponed following discussions between the PZJA agencies. The scheduled visits coincided with the first meeting of the new of the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) Board.

There are no significant financial implications associated with this postponement (airfares, charter flights, accommodation).

The consultants would like to acknowledge the assistance of the PBC Chairs and Torres Strait Island Council officers in planning the visits and for their flexibility regarding changes in dates. Copies of posters and flyers distributed to publicise the visits are provided at Attachments 1 and 2. Once new dates are agreed these will be updated.

The options for rescheduling the consultation will be considered in early 2013.

<b>TORRES STRAIT PRAWN MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Meeting No. 13 13 December 2012</b>
<b>MANAGEMENT Update on Turtle Excluder Devices from US TED Accreditation visits</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 4.2 FOR NOTING</b>

## RECOMMENDATION

- 4.2 That the TSPMAC **NOTES** an update in relation to the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery (TSPF) Turtle Excluder Device (TED) United States Accreditation.

## BACKGROUND

In order to export product to the United States, the TSPF must obtain and retain a United States of America TED accreditation. This accreditation recognises that TEDs used within the fishery are comparable in effectiveness to those used in the United States. This accreditation is viewed by other Australian government and non-government agencies as an important independent assessment of TED use in prawn fisheries. The TSPF along with the East Coast Otter Trawl Fishery (ECOTF) and Northern Prawn Fishery (NPF) were certified compliant with US requirements in 2009, this certification was extended in April 2012.

## DISCUSSION

An inspection of the TEDs used in the TSPF, ECOTF and NPF was undertaken by Officers from the United States of America, State Department representatives. Delegates visited 8 ports with Fisheries Queensland staff and inspected TEDs on approximately 40 vessels. The inspection was undertaken as part of normal procedures relating to the maintenance of US export accreditations and was completed on 8 August 2012.

While the U.S. inspection team identified some general compliance issues, they concluded that the Australian program as it currently operates is generally comparable to the U.S. program. The basis for this was that requirement to use TEDs in Australia is universally accepted as a fait accompli and TED use is “standard operating procedure” among fishers. Furthermore, no evidence of intentional cheating or disabling of TEDs were found, nor was cheating suspected to occur on the high seas<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Relates primarily to the ECOTF and dual endorsed ECOTF / TSPF licence holders.